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Poland

A. General

Animal health conditions and farm environmental sanitation in Poland remain at a low level in comparison to most other European countries, despite contrary inspired propagandism of a few Polish agricultural and veterinary authorities. In fact, dedicated and reasonably competent Polish veterinarians have repeatedly cited common failure of the veterinary service to meet its responsibilities in the control of zoonoses and establishment of effective meat and milk production sanitary procedures. The views of the latter are corroborated by observations of visiting foreign veterinary authorities and by the continuing reports of relatively high incidence of animal diseases. Claims of eradication or control of certain animal diseases are generally unsubstantiated by inclusive reports or investigative data.

While the staff and distribution of veterinary services have been considerably expanded during post World War II years, particularly since 1950, it is obvious that a large share of personnel are poorly qualified or technically disinterested individuals. Limited financial support and inefficient or inequitable distribution of supplies and equipment are further deterrents to the development of the zealously expounded national plans for improved livestock health and higher sanitary standards.

The few advances in Polish veterinary progress toward combatting diseases are a result of the application of foreign techniques. While a considerable number of the better qualified veterinary officials are known to favor the introduction of disease control and sanitation concepts associated with the close alliance of the veterinary

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profession to medical public health programs, political implications have delayed such development.

Political administrative decisions to implement Soviet or other satellite countries' veterinary methods and ideology are reported as conflicting with the recommendations of veterinary leaders, thus often putting the generally better qualified veterinarians in a precarious political position. 1/ 3/ 4/ 10/ 11/ 22/ 23/ 29/ 30/

B. Environmental factors

1. Topography and climate - A large part of Poland's agricultural area is well-suited to animal production. However, frequent wet and moderately cool conditions are not conducive to animal health because of the low sanitary standards of livestock maintenance. Neglect in housing, herding and care of animals are contributing factors to high incidence of tuberculosis and brucellosis, as well as to other debilitating diseases. 1/ 10/ 11/ 29/

2. Socio-economic pattern - Continuing resentment of Polish farmers to the post-World War II State policies toward collectivism are definite factors in restricting active cooperation in veterinary care and disease prevention programs. At the same time, a low economic level in private livestock production has not been conducive to dependence on veterinary care of the animal population. Neglect in animal disease control, as a result of these factors, has created major public health problems throughout the human population, and more particularly a series of significant occupational disease conditions among those engaged in the livestock industry. 1/ 11/ 12/ 14/ 16/ 29/

4. Nutrition

b. Food supply - The low animal productivity, largely a direct result of

widespread and uncontrolled disease, has a direct influence on the restricted national consumption of food of animal origin and an indirect influence on the national economy by limiting the export of this type commodity particularly suited to the agricultural resources in Poland. 1/16/26/29/30/

c. Food sanitation, storage, technology - Sanitary supervision of food of animal origin is extremely limited in Poland. Only a few of the major municipal slaughter establishments and those dealing with export products are equipped to carry out sanitary production. Supervision and inspection of such installations are sub-standard in comparison to procedures carried out in most other European countries. 11/ 12/ 26/ 29/ 31/

C. Diseases

2. Diseases of animals - Although Polish veterinary authorities have recognized the seriousness of animal diseases and proposed innumerable control measures in post-World War II years, organizational plans have been ineffective, financial support lacking, and response of collectives or private owners to propaganda unenthusiastic. The result - a continuation of severe disease problems - leaves Poland in a much less favorable animal and human health position than most other European countries faced with similar problems prior to World War II. 1/ 11/ 12/ 26/ 29/ 30/

(1) Brucellosis - Bovine brucellosis incidence, estimated as high as 40 percent shortly after World War II, continues to be a major problem. Although Polish authorities claim a reduction from approximately 25 percent infection to about 5 percent in the past 5 years, the true incidence is probably much higher. The basis for Polish

estimates of the occurrence of the disease is based on testing of a small total percentage of cattle population. Furthermore, large numbers of indiscriminately vaccinated adult cattle, some probably already infected, were obviously not included in the groups in which tests were made. The records of high infection rates in the human population substantiates the estimate of higher bovine incidence than that indicated by Polish authorities, or suggests unusual neglect in sanitary precautions. Unfortunately, a great deal of time and effort is devoted to theoretical and impractical brucellosis research with little possibility of application to a logical and practicable control program in Poland. Extensive brucellosis studies in Poland are essentially recapitulations of work accomplished elsewhere.

While it is probable that porcine and ovine brucellosis existed for many years in Poland, the actual isolation and identification of such strains of the brucella organism occurred only recently and the extent of infection in these classes of animals is unknown.

Calfhood vaccination is being encouraged and, if pursued with the diligence indicated by reports of veterinary authorities the disease incidence in bovines will be slowly but gradually reduced. 1/ 11/ 12/ 25/ 26/ 29/

(2) Tuberculosis - Bovine tuberculosis is acknowledged by authorities to be widespread. Fragmentary evidence indicates active lesions are quite common. Since testing and identification of reactors is limited and slaughter inspection or milk pasteurization not efficiently carried out, chance of human exposure is high. Control measures are based on the classic Bang method of isolation, segregation and immediate removal of calves from affected mothers, coupled with a selective but gradual slaughter

of reactors. There is little evidence that this plan is assiduously pursued or that there has been any marked reduction in the number of cases. An indication of the seriousness of the bovine tuberculosis situation is a recent reference to a control plan using the vole bacillus vaccine, long abandoned as impractical in dealing with bovine tuberculosis by most recognized authorities. 1/ 3/ 10/ 11/ 24/ 26/

(3) Foot-and-mouth disease - Polish reports indicate the last foot-and-mouth disease infected premises were eliminated late in 1957, after a major epizootic beginning in 1951, reached a peak involving over a million and three-quarters animals in 1952. The government imposed strict regulations, including vaccination, restricted animal movement, disinfection and, in the terminal stages of the epizootic, employed some slaughter of infected animals. The asserted freedom from the disease must be viewed with reservation, and it may well be that current quiescence is in fact a natural epizootic regression which may again flare up in the form of serious outbreaks. 1/2/4/10/11/21/

(4) Anthrax - Anthrax occurs sporadically in cattle and sheep in most areas of Poland. Although vaccination is practiced in some affected areas, the rate of immunization during the past ten years has not been great enough to materially reduce the annual loss from this disease. The failure to effectively control anthrax is apparently the result of an inefficient biological supply system and poor organization of field operations at the district veterinary level. 1/ 2/ 11/ 12/ 13/ 16/

(5) Hog cholera - Hog cholera, the most serious swine disease in Poland, is responsible for a high mortality rate. Although serum and vaccine production has been increased significantly and strict sanitary measures ordered on infected premises, the disease continues to cause periodic serious losses. Like most Soviet satellite areas,

Poland continues to rely on the crystal violet vaccine and places undue confidence on the duration of immunity conferred by this type biological. The occurrence of atypical symptoms is apparently common and this leads to delay in implementing control measures. There is little evidence that veterinary authorities have given serious consideration to the application of the recently developed and more effective attenuated live virus vaccines. 1/ 2/ 10/ 11/ 13/ 15/

(6) Swine erysipelas - Shortages of serum and vaccine have prevented effective control of swine erysipelas. An increase in the application of the non-virulent Staub vaccine has reduced the requirements for expensive and often unattainable immune serum. Choice of the type of vaccination is still left to the local veterinary authorities but the use of the Staub method is becoming more popular. Despite the immunization of over six million hogs annually, as many as one million exposed or affected animals are moved to slaughter each year to avoid direct loss from this disease. 1/ 2/ 10/ 11/ 13/ 15/

(7) Rabies - Rabies, enzootic in Poland immediately after World War II, has been greatly reduced by a sustained compulsory vaccination of dogs in recent years. Foci of infection still exist and wild carnivores remain sources of reinfection. 1/ 2/ 15/

(8) Parasitic infestations - Internal and external parasites, common to all classes of livestock, are the most serious conditions affecting sheep. Distomatosis, scabies, echinococcosis, and verminous bronchitis are the most common parasitic maladies. Control programs are in operation, but both supply of parasiticides and enforcement of regulatory measures are weak, preventing effective reduction in the parasitic infestations. 1/ 2/ 11/ 12/ 13/ 15/

(9) Newcastle's disease - Termed fowl plague in Poland, this disease is largely responsible for the failure to develop a substantial poultry industry. In 1952-1953,

as a result of mishandling the live Mukteswar strain vaccine and improper immunization by inadequately trained assistant personnel, a widespread outbreak occurred. Currently, control measures are supervised by qualified veterinarians and reports indicate a reduction in the number of outbreaks. 1/ 2/ 11/ 13/ 15/

(10) Other diseases - Other diseases affecting cattle are hemorrhagic septicemia, bovine malignant catarrh, blackleg, Johne's disease, and nutritional deficiencies. Swine are commonly affected with salmonellosis, atrophic rhinitis, trichinosis and Tsechen (enzootic encephalitis) disease. Horses suffer from equine infectious anemia, strangles, Borna disease, and mange. 1/ 2/ 3/ 10/ 11/

D. Veterinary medical organization and administration

1. Civilian

a. Organization - The post World War II government established strong central control over all veterinary activities. While private practice was not officially suspended, except for a brief period, the supply and organizational structure virtually eliminated any system other than that supported by the national government's Ministry of Agriculture and the Presidium of the People's Council. The latter authority is concerned with maintaining technical conformity to Polish socialist scientific and economic ideology.

Two units, the Central Veterinary Administration and the Central Veterinary Supply Administration, subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture, control and service research laboratories; biological and pharmaceutical units; district, county, municipal administrations; and veterinary point stations. Veterinary meat and slaughterhouse inspection, formerly under supervision of municipal organizations, is

Chart I

subordinate to the chief district veterinarian. Only the cities of Warsaw and Lodz retained municipal veterinary administration as a result of the 1952 decree, which established seventeen veterinary district administrations, and these two municipalities are considered equivalent in status to districts.

Each Government District Administration is responsible for a Veterinary Institute designed for routine diagnosis. A supply section in each institute is under direction of the Central Supply Administration. The District Veterinary Administrations are responsible for a variable number of County Veterinary Administrations, each of which has five to six Veterinary Points. Veterinary service is closely allied to the local People's Councils, which results in preferential service to the breeding cooperatives and state collective farms. Service to the still existing private farmer is free only for control of epizootics and treatment of breeding animals. Livestock raisers falling in this classification receive the attention of lower echelon veterinarians or veterinary technicians, and suffer the consequence of shortages in veterinary medicaments. Similar veterinary attention to private farmers and state collectives applies only in cases of serious epizootics or area disease eradication programs.

The Ministry of Health is involved in veterinary matters through its supervision and support of the State Institute of Rural Occupational Medicine and Rural Hygiene, which was established in 1951 and is directed by a veterinarian. This Institute in Lublin has one section, Anthropozoonoses, specifically interested in veterinary research and field investigation of animal diseases communicable to man. The relationship to the Ministry of Agriculture's functions and institutes is maintained through Commissions of Occupational Medicine in Industry and Agriculture and of Safeguarding

Rural Populations Health. Cooperation on the limited veterinary programs of this Institute and the veterinary activities in the Ministry of Agriculture services are apparently good. Members of both organizations share favorable reaction to the veterinary public health concepts expressed in western countries. 2/7/9/10/11/24/29/30/

b. Legal controls

(1) Licensure - For employment, a fully qualified veterinarian is required to obtain a diploma from a recognized veterinary school. Those assigned as meat or slaughterhouse inspectors must, in addition, take a one-month course in meat control. Veterinary technicians are certified for particular duties after completing required training programs. 10/ 11/ 12/

(2) Quarantine - The District Veterinary Administration at ports of entry control the import and quarantine requirements of animals and products of animal origin, which may be quarantined or held for inspection according to judgement of the administration. Health certificates are required for live animals. Animals for export may be detained in order to inspect and issue health certification 24 hours prior to shipment. Internal quarantines on farms or at district and provincial borders are imposed in cases of epizootic disease outbreaks, such as foot-and-mouth disease. Movement restriction may include animals, animal products, products suspected of potentially carrying the disease, and in some cases humans. 10/ 11/ 12/

(3) Inspection - Various decrees, revised and amended from 1945 to 1955, have been put in force to control meat and milk production and distribution. A few major slaughterhouse and packing establishments maintain reasonably effective inspection standards. Some even utilize trichinoscopes and conduct histopathological

surveys to identify trichinosis affected meat. In rural and farm areas inspection and sanitary slaughter is generally superficially controlled by inadequately trained technicians. Sanitary standards in milk plants and meat markets are low.

Control of veterinary medicaments produced in four plants in Poland and those imported is under jurisdiction of the State Veterinary Institute at Pulawy (PIW) (51-25N - 21-58E). The authorities of this Institute determine the standards and release supplies for distribution through the Central Supply Administration. 10/11/12/13/

e. Professional veterinary organizations - Two veterinary societies function in Poland. The Polish Society of Veterinary Science is chiefly interested in the propagation of scientific knowledge through meetings and seminars. The Section of Veterinary Science of the Engineering Society is interested in development of professional contact and improvement in qualification among members working in the veterinary services. 10/

d. Veterinary research - Veterinary research in Poland shows little initiative or progress in the post World War II period. With few exceptions, veterinarians are incapable of carrying out original research, and those that might be competent investigators are inhibited by poor facilities or bureaucratic governmental obstacles. 1/ 26/ 29/ 30/

f. Emergency veterinary services - Veterinary services in Poland, completely dominated through the Central Veterinary Administration, can be immediately mobilized to combat major epizootics. In cases of foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks the entire veterinary force is used to first reduce the incidence of infection and then eradicate the disease. The Army Veterinary Service is also involved in support of institutes

used for training veterinarians in emergency measures. (See Section D2) 10/ 11/ 30/

2. Military veterinary organization

The Polish veterinary military organization is maintained by drafting graduate veterinarians. The draftees are given a three-months' training course at one of the educational or laboratory institutions. Most are released following training, but maintained on an officer list. A Military Veterinary Institute was established near Dabrowka, west of the Warsaw-Piaseczno highway, at one time, but it is not known if this school is currently operating. An important function of the army veterinary service is supervision of a state farm livestock reserve based on an assigned quota. This system is designed to reduce maintenance of large depot reserves. Veterinary assistants are trained to care for military draft or cavalry animals. There is no evidence of veterinary participation in bacteriological warfare activity. 26/ 29/ 30/ 32/ 33/

E. Veterinary manpower

Polish veterinary manpower, badly depleted during World War II, is currently reaching an adequate level. As a result of the graduation of increasing numbers of qualified veterinarians, the government has closed several institutional sections for training veterinary assistants or technicians. Since the state maintains solid control of veterinary affairs, distribution of personnel is not a serious problem, and with over 4,000 qualified veterinarians and 3,500 veterinary technicians available, veterinary stations or service points throughout Poland are reasonably well staffed. A trend toward replacing positions formerly held by veterinary technicians or assistants with qualified veterinarians is underway. Three veterinary colleges, located in Warsaw, Wroclaw and Lublin, all operating with substandard facilities, graduate about 300

veterinarians each year. Graduate and research training is apparently weak, partly as a result of mediocre faculty standards and slow development of high quality laboratory facilities. An unstable political influence and uncertain economic support of research installations also contribute to the lack of inspired research progress.1/8/10/11/18/19/20/26/28/29/30/

F. Veterinary facilities

The principal veterinary service organization in Poland is the State Veterinary Institute at Pulawy (51-25N - 21-58E), with main branches at Bydgoszcz (53-09N - 18-00E), Olsztyn (51-54N - 21-02E), Gorzow (51-02N - 18-26E), and Krakow (50-05N - 19-55E). These installations are the major veterinary research, biological production, and pharmaceutical preparation centers of the state-operated bio-veterinary industry. A few smaller special investigation centers are established from time to time to study special disease problems. The output of these plants is the source of supply of essentially all the veterinary materials distributed throughout Poland by the Central Veterinary Supply Administration, Warsaw (52-15N - 21-00E).

Each of the seventeen Provincial and two Municipal Veterinary Administrations have a Veterinary Institute equipped to care for large animals, serve as an intermediate supply depot and conduct routine laboratory diagnosis. Facilities and equipment in these institutes are inadequate and this condition, coupled with the general lack of well qualified scientific personnel, have limited sound investigative procedures and research development.

Provincial Veterinary Administration Institutes service and supply five to six veterinary substations (points). Facilities in these substations are, for the most part, deficient to an extent precluding application of effective veterinary technique.

Many have no refrigeration for biologicals, and most are without regular transport for routine field service.

The State Institute of Rural Occupational Medicine and Rural Hygiene in Lublin (51-15N - 22-34E), includes a Section on Anthropozoonoses. The veterinary scientific work related to diseases of animals communicable to man at this Institute and in related field investigation, have not been particularly outstanding.

The facilities of the three schools of veterinary medicine - Warsaw Veterinary Faculty, Warsaw (52-15N - 21-00E); Veterinary Faculty of the Agricultural School, Wroclaw (51-06N - 17-02E); Veterinary Faculty of the Marie Curie Sklodowska University, Lublin (51-15N - 22-34E) - are being enlarged and improved at a slow rate. These faculties and the individual veterinary departments are not equipped to impart satisfactory veterinary education or to contribute significantly to veterinary research or investigation. Private veterinary laboratories and practice have been virtually eliminated by the State regulations and policies. 1/ 8/ 10/ 11/ 13/ 14/ 18/ 19/ 20/ 30/

G. Veterinary supplies and materials

The supply of veterinary biologicals, pharmaceuticals and equipment, considerably increased in recent years, is still short of national requirements. The major causes for the failure of Polish veterinary installations to provide adequate supplies are the antiquated production methods, reliance on economically inefficient biologicals, and ineffective distribution and preservation methods. A further important factor is the waste resulting from lack of readily available transport to apply medicaments and the deterioration of a large part of distributed items.

Periodic shortages of biologicals urgently needed in disease control programs make emergency importation from neighboring countries essential.

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Raw materials for veterinary pharmaceuticals, fabricated in the country, are regularly imported. East and West Germany are the principal supply sources, and very little veterinary material is obtained from the U.S.S.R. 1/ 10/ 11/ 13/ 14/ 30/

H. Reference data

Chart I: Organization of Veterinary Services, Poland.

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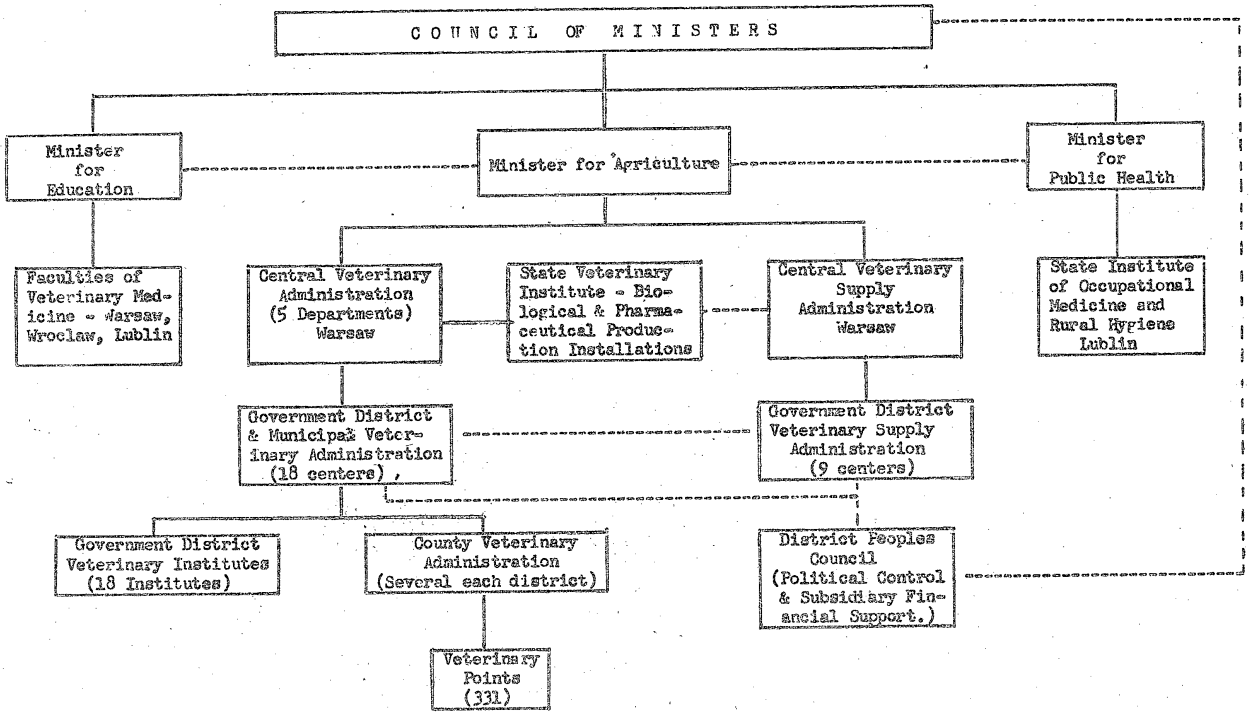
Chart I: Organization of Veterinary Services, Poland.



Solid lines indicate direct control.
Dotted lines indicate indirect or cooperative participation.

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